

Chapter 4

Police Officer Selection

This selection process is a series of hurdles that result in elimination from the application pool if failed causing the pool to shrink every step of the way. Less costly steps are at the beginning of the process to prevent wasting money. This funnel effect is called "**weeding out**." Weeding out candidates means taking a large pool and finding reasons to disqualify candidates. There is also "**screening in**" which is finding people to match a profile of what they believe a good officer would be. Screening in is better, however most agencies don't do it this way for a couple reasons. The candidate pool is often very large and if they eliminate a good applicant there are plenty more that are qualified, and many agencies have not identified what the qualities that make a good police officer. Agencies know what they don't want to see, but they don't know what makes a candidate superior or inferior to their peers. The selection process is sometimes more of an art than a science.

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

The 1964 Civil Rights Act and its 1972 Title VII amendment are federal directives that monitor unfair labor employment, this act prohibits that employers refuse to hire a person based on race, sex, color, religion, or national origin. The 1972 amendment established the Equal Employer Opportunity Commission as the committee in charge of upholding this law. Their main goal is to identify and eliminate unfair hiring practices. One exception is the **Bona Fied Occupational Qualification (BFOQ)**. The employer must show that there is a need to have this exception in order for the job to be done in a safe and efficient manner. Police agencies used to have a height requirement but it was found unconstitutional. Swim test may be valid BFOQ In a beach city but won't be in a desert city. One problem of the 1964 Civil Rights Act was that it didn't specify what discrimination was. The Supreme Court decision from *Griggs vs. Duke Power Company* clarified this. If the requirement didn't reflect how

employees performed job tasks then it is discriminatory. This decision also introduced *Prima Facie Discrimination*; it is an employment requirement that disproportionately excludes a protected group from being hired. Also the employer must prove a viable connection between the prerequisite and job performance. In order to prove *prima facie* four criteria must be met. They are: Person must belong to minority or female group, must meet the minimum entrance requirements, employer must reject the applicant even though requirements were met, and the employer must have continued to interview others.

The Selection Process

The selection process is how police departments choose who will get the job. While practices differ from agency to agency, most include a criminal record check, an interview, a background investigation, and a driving record check in their procedures. The following processes are in order they will typically be administered if they are given by that department.

The Application

The application serves as the primary step of the employment process. It gives information that can be used to verify the minimum requirements are met. Minimum requirements vary from state to state but most are similar. Michigan and Wisconsin, for example, have a minimum amount of credits one needs to finish in order to be allowed to apply. Stricter criteria can be applied though which is why these are "minimum standards." As part of the weeding out process, the application is checked for things like arrest record and driving history, unsatisfactory conditions will cause the applicant to be weeded out.

The Written Psych Exam

This is given because administrations want to make sure applicants are mentally sound. This is because if people are hired who are unfit for duty or misbehave then they are liable civilly. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), the California Personality Inventory (CPI), and the Inwald

Personality Inventory (IPI), are the most commonly used tests. The purpose of these tests is to weed out people who have emotional or psychological instability. These are done early because paper and pencil tests are inexpensive. These tests do not work well for screening in purposes, but are effective for weeding out.

The Background Investigation

Is another weeding out maneuver? Agencies are interested in disqualifying people who presented questionable credentials or tried to hide things. This check will also look for things like work history, credit checks, significant loans or debts which could compromise an officers integrity, and rapport with co-workers. This check is aimed at uncovering flaws that signify the need to weed out the candidate.

Polygraph Testing

This type of testing is designed to find elusive behavior, lies, and potential problem areas for an applicant. Although this type of testing has come under fire in the private sector, it is still allowed in the public sector where more intrusive screening is necessary for increased public safety. Some departments pair this part with a urine test for drugs. While mass drug testing is not allowed for public employees without individualized suspicions first, the same rule does not apply to pre-employment screening. This is because submitting an application is voluntary and the greater need for public safety outweighs any individual expectation of privacy. Agencies recognize experimentation and may wave the fact that when younger people may have tried marijuana. However agencies want to be confident that officers will abide by the law themselves, particularly with substance abuse. One limitation is time, urine tests only show a few days in to the past while hair analysis may show 2-3 months back,

The Psychological View